

Message Text

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S E C R E T ATHENS 2826

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EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR GR US

SUBJECT: US-GREEK BASE NEGOTIATIONS-CALOGERAS/STEARNS MEETING

REF: ATHENS 2781

1. IN FURTHERANCE OF TACTICS OUTLINED IN REFTEL, BY WHICH WE SEEK TO LINK TERMINATION OF HOMEPORTING WITH CONTINUATION OF ESSENTIAL US FACILITIES AT HELLENIKON (ATHENAI AB). STEARNS MET INFORMALLY WITH CALOGERAS THIS MORNING. HE TOLD CALOGERAS THAT US SIDE WAS DISTURBED BY APPARENT INFLEXIBILITY OF GREEK POSITION ON OUR FACILITIES AT HELLENIKON. IT SEEMED CLEAR THAT THIS ISSUE AND HOMEPORTING WERE THE TWO KEY PROBLEM AREAS TO EMERGE THUS FAR IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. THEY COULD NOT BE TREATED SEPARATELY BECAUSE OF WIDER STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS WHICH STEARNS HAD DISCUSSED IN PLENARY MEETING WITH THE GREEK NEGOTIATORS. ACCORDINGLY, IT SEEMED TO STEARNS THAT IF PROGRESS WAS NOT POSSIBLE TREATING HELLENIKON AND HOMEPORTING SEPARATELY, WE SHOULD TRY TO MAKE PROGRESS BY DEALING WITH THEM IN TANDEM.

2. WHAT CONCERNED THE US SIDE, STEARNS CONTINUED, WAS THE GREEK TENDENCY TO ARGUE THAT NOTHING THE US WAS DOING AT HELLENIKON SERVED GREEK DEFENSE NEEDS. STEARNS DID NOT PERSONALLY THINK THAT THIS COULD BE BE A CONSIDERED OR FINAL GREEK VIEW. US-GREEK COOPERATION AT HELLENIKON HAD BEEN GOING ON FOR A LONG TIME. THE GREEK GOVT WAS CERTAINLY AWARE THAT THIS BASE

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SHELTERED ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES ESSENTIAL NOT ONLY TO

THE US BUT TO THE WIDER INTERESTS OF GREECE. IF THIS ASSUMPTION WAS CORRECT IT OUGHT TO BE POSSIBLE FOR THE GREEK SIDE TO ACCEPT THE PRINCIPLE OF A CONTINUING AMERICAN PRESENCE AT HELLENIKON. THEREBY PERMITTING NEGOTIATIONS TO GO FORWARD ON THE REAL PROBLEM, WHICH WAS TO IDENTIFY THOSE FACILITIES AT HELLENIKON WHICH WOULD REMAIN AND THOSE WHICH WOULD BE ELIMINATED.

3. IF CALOGERAS COULD GIVE HIM PRIVATE ASSURANCES THAT THE GREEK SIDE WAS WILLING TO ACCEPT THE PRINCIPLE OF A CONTINUING AMERICAN PRESENCE AT HELLENIKON, STEARNS SAID THAT IT MIGHT HELP PERSUADE WASHINGTON TO REACH PENDING DECISIONS ON HOMEPORTING MORE QUICKLY AND EXPEDITIOUSLY. STEARNS ASKED CALOGERAS WHETHER HE COULD GIVE SUCH ASSURANCES TO WASHINGTON ON A PERSONAL AND INFORMAL BASIS.

4. CALOGERAS REPLIED THAT THE AMERICAN POSITION IN THE NEGOTIATIONS HAD BEEN LESS FLEXIBLE THAN THE GREEK GOVT HAD BEEN LED TO BELIEVE IT WOULD BE. THUS FAR THE US SIDE HAD PROPOSED NO CHANGES MORE FAR REACHING THAN THE CHANGING OF SIGNS FROM ENGLISH INTO GREEK. THE GREEK SIDE HAD BEEN CONCERNED BY STEARNS REMARKS ABOUT CONSIDERATIONS OF "TIMING" RELATED TO HOMEPORTING AND ABOUT THE "SIGNALS" WHICH STEARNS HAD IMPLIED WOULD BE TRANSMITTED TO POTENTIAL ADVERSARIES IF HOMEPORTING WERE TERMINATED. THE GREEK SIDE DID NOT ACCEPT THIS LINE OF ARGUMENT SINCE TERMINATION OF HOMEPORTING WOULD STILL LEAVE A SIGNIFICANT AMERICAN PRESENCE IN GREECE AND COULD NOT, THEREFORE, BE INTERPRETED BY OUR ADVERSARIES AS THE END OF US/GREEK MILITARY COOPERATION.

5. STEARNS REPEATED THAT HOMEPORTING COULD NOT BE CONSIDERED SEPARATELY FROM HELLENIKON. HE ASKED AGAIN WHETHER CALOGERAS COULD GIVE HIM ASSURANCES THAT GREEK SIDE ACCEPTED THE PRINCIPLE OF A CONTINUING AMERICAN PRESENCE HERE. CALOGERAS SAID THAT HE DID NOT HAVE AUTHORITY TO PROVIDE AN EXPLICIT ASSURANCE OF THIS KIND BUT THAT STEARNS COULD TELL WASHINGTON THAT THE GREEK SIDE DID NOT HAVE A CLOSED MIND ON THE SUBJECT AND DID NOT "PRECLUDE" A CONTINUING AMERICAN PRESENCE AT
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HELLENIKON. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE AND HIS MILITARY COLLEAGUES COULD SEE THE DIFFICULTIES THAT WOULD BE INVOLVED IN RELOCATING OUR TELECOMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES AND IN OPERATING OUR HEAVY KC-135 AND EP-3 AIRCRAFT FROM ANY OTHER AIRFIELD. IN THE CONTINUING SUB-GROUP MEETINGS ON THE US FACILITIES AT HELLENIKON, THE GREEK SIDE HOPED THAT WE WOULD BE AS PRECISE AS POSSIBLE IN IDENTIFYING COMPONENT SERVICES THAT WE REGARDED AS ESSENTIAL

AND IN INDICATING AREAS WHERE CUTS COULD BE MADE.

6. STEARNS SAID THAT WE WOULD TRY TO DO THIS. HE THEN ASKED CALOGERAS WHETHER THE GREEK SIDE IN THE COMING WEEK INTENDED TO RAISE NEW PROBLEMS. CALOGERAS SAID THAT THE GREEK SIDE DID WISH TO TALK ABOUT "HELLENIZATION" AT NEA MAKRI AND IRAKLION BUT WOULD NOT PROPOSE CHANGES THAT WOULD INTERFERE WITH WHAT HE TERMED THE BASIC MISSION OF THESE FACILITIES. IN GENERAL HE THOUGHT THAT HELLENIKON AND HOMEPORTING WERE THE KEY PROBLEMS AND THAT NOTHING THAT THE GREEKS WISHED TO DISCUSS IN OTHER AREAS WOULD POSE SERIOUS PROBLEMS FOR US. STEARNS THANKED HIM FOR THIS CLARIFICATION AND SAID THAT HE WOULD SEEK TO ACCELERATE DECISIONS IN WASHINGTON ON HOMEPORTING WHICH MIGHT BE POLITICALLY HELPFUL TO THE GREEKS.

7. COMMENT: THIS IS PROBABLY AS MUCH AS WE CAN GET FROM CALOGERAS IN THE WAY OF ASSURANCES RELATED TO OUR FACILITIES AT HELLENIKON. HE WAS INSISTENT THAT HIS REMARKS BE CLOSELY HELD IN WASHINGTON AND, IN PARTICULAR, THAT NO INDICATION BE GIVEN TO THE GREEK EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON THAT THERE WAS A SOFTENING OF THE GREEK POSITION ON HELLENIKON. IN FACT, WE BELIEVE THAT THE GREEK GOVT WILL AGREE TO THE CONTINUATION OF ESSENTIAL US FACILITIES AT HELLENIKON. THE COMMENTS OF FONMIN BITSIOS TO AMB KUBISCH IN A SEPARATE MEETING THIS MORNING (BEING REPORTED SEPTEL) TEND TO STRENGTHEN THIS IMPRESSION. WE WILL CONTINUE TO PRESS THE GREEK SIDE IN SUB-GROUP MEETINGS AND WILL BE PREPARED ON MONDAY TO PROVIDE THEM WITH SOMEWHAT MORE INFORMATION ON WHAT WE REGARD AS ESSENTIAL AT HELLENIKON, AS WELL AS AREAS IN WHICH REDUCTIONS MIGHT BE MADE. IF THIS PROCESS GOES SMOOTHLY, WE MAY BE IN A POSITION TO OFFER A CONCESSION
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ON HOMEPORTING IN THE NEXT PLENARY.

8. DEPT PLEASE PASS MESSAGE TO SECDEF, JCS, USNMR SHAPE, USDELMC, USCINCEUR, CINCUSNAVEUR, CINCUSAFE AND USMISSION NATO.
KUBISCH

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED ADDEES IN PARA 9.

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